

THE

## BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

VOL. XLI.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 2, 1850.

No. 22.

### DIVERSITIES OF HUMAN CHARACTER, AND DELICATE SHADES OF INSANITY—THEIR RELATION TO OFFENCES AND CRIMES.

A Lecture delivered at the Royal College of Physicians, in 1849, By JOHN CONOLLY, M.D.,  
Physician to the Middlesex Lunatic Asylum at Hanwell.

WHEN reflecting on the diversities of the human character, and the inequality of different mental faculties in different men, as manifested in their lives, we perceive that in some the inequality or peculiarity was such, that, although not accounted insane, they were really, to a great extent, of unsound minds all their lives. There have been monarchs, conquerors, judges, women, so cruel that it is impossible to doubt that a taint of madness existed in them. The horrible severities of our Judge Jeffreys were probably only the indications of actual madness, of which paroxysms were induced by his intemperate habits; but the activity of the intellectual faculties kept this man, and other scourges of mankind, from the wholesome seclusion and discipline which might have been serviceable.

The unfeeling eccentricities of Swift were but the earlier symptoms of the insanity which came at length fully upon him, and extinguished his remarkable intellect. Rousseau's eloquent words declare the infirmities of a highly-gifted mind from youth. When he grew older, his restless suspicions made all acknowledge that "he was frenzied"

"To that worst pitch of all, which wears a reasoning show."

And Byron himself, who applied these words to Rousseau, was so manifestly suffering during his whole life from the taint of ancestral faults, as to give bitter truth to his own repeated expressions, that his mind had often known the worst of trials.

There is no name in literature or morals to be pronounced with more grateful veneration than that of Johnson; yet his extraordinary oddities, his wild and singular habits, the difficulty with which he compelled his mind to its great labors, his excessive irascibility, his unmeasured rudeness, even his uncalculating benevolence, and numerous minor peculiarities, show, as some particular periods in his mental life actually declare, that with all his powers he was not at all times of sound mind. When only 20 years of age he was so afflicted with a morbid melancholy, as to be "almost overwhelmed with perpetual irritation, fretfulness and

impatience, and with a dejection, gloom, and despair, which made existence misery."—[Boswell.] And from this dismal malady, his biographer says, he was never afterwards perfectly relieved. In his private meditations he speaks of having had "disturbances of the mind very near to madness." His own explanation is the best:—"I inherited," he said to Lady Macleod, "a vile melancholy from my father, which has made me mad all my life—at least, not sober."

Examples of unsoundness in highly-gifted minds might be greatly multiplied, and an instructive book might be written upon them—not, however, by a mere compiler of anecdotes, but by one able to delineate such fine diversities delicately and with discrimination.

If such were any part of my design, I might pass from the consideration of such irregularly-exercised minds, and passionate natures, as those of Rousseau, Swift and Byron, to a consideration of the less explicable visitation of mental malady in the case of Cowper, and examine how, from time to time, insanity, in its most depressing form, perverted one of the finest, and most delicate, and best-attuned souls that ever addressed itself to song. Pensive, as such minds often are, but pious, and tolerant, and humane, and loving all God's works, and subject to no violence of passion or fortune, his thoughts in harmony with all that was beautiful in earth and heaven, the fits of melancholy to which he became subject, and which finally overwhelmed him, are but another illustration of the mystery with which the physical causes of insanity are yet surrounded. In the life of this distinguished poet, written by Southey, and in the latter portion of the life of Scott, by Lockhart, there are illustrations of the progressive victory of physical disease over mental power which are not less affecting than instructive. They died without reproach. But in the gradual yielding of the faculties in less happy instances, and often before the excuse of old age exists, the control of the reason seems partly withdrawn, often in consequence of evident illness, but sometimes without evident illness, and some low passion or depraved impulse is let loose, and the latter part of life is disgraced, and death is welcomed as a retreat from faults and folly. I believe that, in certain cases of this kind, the individual has had a very slight and almost unnoticed attack of paralysis, on which certain changes of character have supervened. In one case, at least, which came under my particular notice, an elderly gentleman found that two of the fingers of one hand had become numb; soon afterwards he became desponding and prone to tears, quite contrary to his ordinary character; and growing more and more despairing, at last shot himself.

Whoever would estimate the various characters of men justly, must take a wide survey of them, and direct especial attention to those in which, whilst there is neither the strength nor the weakness which leads to crimes, there is an equal impossibility of being what can properly be called virtuous.

At the risk of being pronounced fanciful, but with a purpose which I shall afterwards explain, I here select an example of this singular class, and request your indulgence if, to illustrate the mild insanity which sometimes pervades a man's whole life, I introduce the name of the

celebrated Mr. Brummell, whose biography, far from having any character of comedy in it, seems to me but the mournful history of a diseased mind, from its gay beginning to its miserable end.

Whoever reads that painful and warning book, will see that this man, whose name is associated with fashion and display, was all his life long the subject of one of those fine shades of insanity in which the perceptions were morbidly intense ; regard for the ordinary means of worldly success absurdly absent ; the natural feelings, or sentiments and propensities, morbid ; and that at length he became actually insane.

At first he possessed talents, set off by a degree of assurance which nothing could daunt. His extreme selfishness led him to foster and nourish every morbid sensation, until he could scarcely endure the presence of common mortality, and re-made his toilet three time a-day, and became the slave of a thousand capricious wants. Dependent on the mere refinements of luxury for the gratification of touch, sight, taste and smell, he appears to have had no affections, and no passions. He seems to have been one of that very distinct class of men who are without sexual instincts, and to whom the love of woman is unknown. He threw away professional rank and prospects, and eventually his whole property, for idleness among men of a rank to which he did not by birth belong.

In his later years, deserted by the great, and living in exile, surrounded by none who knew and pitied his hapless case, he still insanely wasted the means of mere subsistence on the idlest luxuries, spent much of each day in dressing himself elaborately, although his clothes were almost in rags ; and could not endure existence without Parisian blacking, costly perfumes, and biscuits from one particular shop. At length, although without money, and sometimes without food, he fancied his desolate French lodging filled with evening assemblies of the noble and the gay, whose names were announced to him, and with whom, in his delirious state, he talked grandly, and wittily, and flippantly, as of old. By a strange retributive destiny, this fastidious man, who had, in his easier days, refined his sensations into instruments of suffering, and who only dressed and lived to be seen and admired, "the observed of all observers," became a spectacle painful to sight, sate at public tables, devouring ordinary food with voracity, and from weakness of body and mind became offensive to the senses of others. He still lived on, and as much as he still could, in public, paralyzed, dirty and insane. But even in this state, no one cared to inquire into the cause of his altered habits and afflictions, and they were not yet understood.

At last he found mercy, which the world could not show him, in the asylum of the Bon Sauveur, near Caen. The Sisters of Charity, ever kind and good, tended and soothed the fallen and broken beau, and he lived in that christian institution for awhile, in peaceful helplessness, and then, "turning his face to the wall," silently resigned his frail, imperfect soul to death.

If we attempt to estimate justly the character of those who have most excited the ridicule or the anger of society, we shall find many in whom a slight taint of insanity accounts for, although it may not altogether excuse, their conduct. We cannot but learn, at all events, by

such examinations, to be slow to condemn ; and find reason to view the faults of others more with sorrow than with anger. How few can sincerely say that in themselves no foibles or imperfections, no passion or heedless impulse, no sins, presumptuous or concealed, exist, which, in certain circumstances, might not have led to sorrow, or never-ending regret, or despair ; to crime, or to shame ! “The learned, the judicious, the pious Boerhaave,” to use the words of Johnson, “relates that he never saw a criminal dragged to execution, without asking himself, ‘who knows whether this man is not less culpable than me ?’”

In families in which there has been declared insanity in the last generation, nothing is more common than to find irregularity of conduct, an insensibility to moral obligations, or some irregular exercise of the mind in certain of their descendants. This is the real explanation of many of those cases of young men in whom all the lower propensities predominate ; and of young women, regardless of the refinement befitting their station, or even of decorum. It may seem unreasonable to say that such young persons are not of sound mind ; but all who are often consulted about such cases, well know that the mind is really unsound, and generally, to a certain extent, disqualified for forming correct judgments, or for regulating the conduct. The perfect liberty of such persons is inconsistent with the preservation of their character or their property, or, in some cases, of their life ; although interference with them not unfrequently exposes their relatives to unjust censure.

These considerations occasionally become of serious importance in relation to offences and crimes committed by persons for whom the plea of unsoundness of mind is set up. Those who condemn the occasional support of such a plea by medical witnesses, are not aware how much oftener medical men are solicited to support such excuses, and how often they refuse ; and that when they do support such a plea, it is from convictions which it would be cowardice and dishonor to disobey. We may refuse it in the case of a cruel commander, whose drunken pastime it is to maim or murder persons under his control, and removed from protection ; and also in the case of young gentlemen of family who commit forgery, and defraud a tradesman, and excuse themselves by saying that they are conscious of a morbid desire to amass wealth. In such cases, strange to say, the law sometimes throws its shield over the criminal, without requiring medical opinions ; whilst in other cases, where the medical observer declares that there is a diseased mind, the law despises the assertion altogether.

However liable the plea of insanity may be to abuse, it would be cruel and unjust in many cases to exclude it. Its object is to screen the irresponsible, and, therefore, the innocent, from the terrible punishments allotted to guilt and crime. A medical man must shut his eyes to the truth if he denies the frequent occurrence, in morbid minds, of impulses to actions which the patient himself cannot control ; and if these actions are criminal, the want of control is still true in many instances.

In acute mania, or in profound melancholia, homicide or suicide would generally be ascribed to disease ; but the greater number of cases are less clear to the public comprehension.



Physicians who are much consulted in mental disorders well know that nothing is so common as for patients to detail the impulses which torment them—impulses sometimes merely to walk, run, shout, turn round and round, or to break windows and crockery, and quarrel loudly and long with anybody that comes in the way, or to drink anything that will intoxicate them—impulses sometimes confined to thoughts and language; as when persons of piety find blasphemous or indelicate thoughts and words obtruding themselves upon them at church or in their private devotions; but often, more distressing impulses to steal, or to set fire to buildings; or in the cases in which affectionate women lament that their love for their husband continuing unabated, they have frequent suggestions to murder him; or that, although they tenderly love their children, they dread to be alone with them, feeling as if they must kill them, or tear out their eyes, or otherwise injure them. The will has nothing to do with those cases; and the reason is felt to be so frail a protection that the patients voluntarily leave their homes for a period, fearing they shall commit some crime.

Yet, in these cases, the patients mix in society, like other people, and show no ordinary signs of unsoundness of mind; although not only subject to these often-recurring suggestions, but to that of self-destruction.

A lady, 45 years of age, and the mother of thirteen children, related to me, that at 14 years of age she recollects that she used to suffer from vague and distressing apprehensions, and to be much agitated. She says she was always hysterical. This lady was of a most amiable disposition, naturally cheerful and intelligent, much attached to her husband and children, an excellent manager in her family, and when separated from them, wrote them letters full of good feelings and sound advice. But for more than seven years, except during her pregnancies, she avowed that she had suffered from peculiar impulses, directed towards a particular individual, between whom and herself nothing had ever passed beyond the civilities of ordinary intercourse. At other times her impulse was to bite her children, her husband, or her friends. She said she felt that she must bite their noses off; and she snapped her teeth for hours together. She interrogated, and often reasoned with herself, repeating every expression sixteen times, beginning again if she made any mistake in the repetition. She described all her symptoms in the most collected manner, expressed wonder at the folly of some of them, and bewailed with tears the opposite nature of others to all that was natural in her character. She lamented that the more repulsive and wretched a thought was, the more she felt, at times, as if it must be dwelt upon and put into words. She said that she had sung, screamed and danced, with the wild and wicked impulse of being the wife of the devil; and had sometimes wished that she could make herself worse and become mad. When I saw this patient, she had been for a short time under the direction of a physician practising in diseases of women, who had ascertained that the os and cervix uteri were in an extremely vascular and irritable condition.

A woman, 40 years of age, and several years insane, said to me that

when her excitement returned, she felt as if it would delight her to seize somebody, throw them down, and trample upon them until they were dead.

Another, never insane enough for confinement, told me she sometimes lay awake in the night, looking at her husband, and thinking how easily she might kill him with the broom-handle; and that she awoke him, that his talking to her might drive these thoughts out of her head.

Whilst a friend of mine was at Strasburg, a soldier became the subject of a sudden homicidal impulse. He sallied out, resolved to kill the first person whom he met, whomsoever it might be. It happened that an artist, who had a house in the suburbs, was pruning his vines, and the soldier attacked him, and cut his throat.

During the summer before the last, a lady, the wife of a gentleman of fortune, got up in the night, walked out of the house, and drowned herself in the pond. In the morning the gentleman awoke, and found his wife missing. There had been no previous suspicion of melancholy, or despondency, or insanity.

Innumerable cases might be added to these; and when, in such circumstances, a great crime is committed, society feels it very difficult to decide on the guilt and responsibility of the person committing it. Supposing, for instance, the lady last mentioned had murdered her husband in the night, instead of committing suicide, and that if, after the act, she had become calm (which is not an uncommon case), what jury or what judge would much regard medical testimony as regarded the fact of such temporary madness?

A young woman in the Hanwell asylum, subject to fits of violent hysteria, for a time loses all apparent sense and consciousness. For a day or two homicidal ideas entirely possess her; and she has been known to take a large knife from the kitchen, with some vague intention of committing murder. After a day or two, these ideas depart, and the impulse to homicide exists no more.

Impulses to destroy themselves are most common among lunatics, and frequently exist without any wish to obey the impulse. They will even pray to be protected from themselves. In one instance, a man who was discharged from the asylum became partially insane on returning to his own home. He was in perpetual fear that he should leap out of the window; or that he should cut his throat when shaving; and he voluntarily returned to the Asylum, that he might be taken care of.

In those cases in which the temporary impulse is to kill some other person, murder may be committed in the paroxysm; and after the act, the paroxysm having subsided, the question of the responsibility of the patient, and of the state of the mind at the time of its committal, becomes difficult for a jury to decide upon.

Such a case was tried two years ago. A tradesman, about 50 years of age, remarkable not only for uprightness in all his dealings, but for the kindness of his disposition, and whose benevolence had been strongly manifested on several occasions, became involved in his affairs. About the same time one of his friends, whom he much regarded, committed suicide. His temper underwent a change; he was noticed to be ob-

stinate and reckless, and liable to alternate fits of depression and of anger; his nights were often sleepless, and his appearance became worn and haggard. Sometimes he seemed feverish; his memory often failed; he gave inconsistent orders; he could not keep his accounts correctly. There were certain transactions between him and one particular creditor, concerning which it was found impossible to make him take a rational view; he considered that this creditor was engaged, in company with others, in a conspiracy to ruin him. It happened that he lost money by several of his customers, nearly at the same time, one of whom very unexpectedly absconded. He became almost frantic, wrote large placards, which he wished to be affixed to the houses of those who had duped him, and complained that all the world was conspiring against him. When in this state of mind, an execution was put into his house by the creditor above alluded to; and the unfortunate man tore his hair, stamped, cried, and was thrown into an agony of distress. For many nights afterwards he was known scarcely to sleep; and he was observed to be restless, irascible, and feverish and thirsty during the day. At the end of this time he went out, armed with an old pair of pistols, which he was not known to have touched or seen for many years; and calling at the office of his creditor, fired one of them at him, wounding him severely in the face; and discharged the other at his own head, with the effect of slight temporary injury. But after a few days, the person committing this outrage became perfectly tranquil, and he has remained so ever since. He was tranquil in prison, and in no degree desirous of the plea of insanity being advanced in his favor, although he said he felt wholly at a loss to explain his even thinking of the pistols, which he scarcely knew how to load; and all that he had done was now unaccountable to him. The question in this case was, at the trial, whether the prisoner was of sound mind at the time of committing the crime with which he was charged? The jury were satisfied that he was not; and it did, indeed, appear that the approach of a maniacal attack had in this case been gradual, that at length it reached its climax, and manifested itself in actions quite opposed to the ordinary character of the prisoner; and that after proceeding to the extremity of violence and fury, the mind recovered, either gradually, under the influence of new and impressive circumstances, or all at once.—*London Lancet*.

[To be continued.]

#### FRACTURE OF THE CRANIUM—CONCUSSION AND COMPRESSION OF THE BRAIN.

BY T. S. BELL, M.D., OF LOUISVILLE, KY.

On the subject of injuries of the head, Hennen says:—"The young surgeon who, for the first time, witnesses a series of injuries of this description, will at every step have something to unlearn; he will find symptoms so complicated, contradictory, and insufficient to give any rational clue to their causes; diagnostics, of the truth of which he had read himself into a conviction, so totally unsupported by the results of

practice; and the sympathies he was led to look for as infallible accompaniments of certain states of disease, so often wanting altogether, that he will possibly be inclined to relinquish the hope of ever arriving at a correct theory, or, at least, he will enter the clinical ward with the pride of science considerably reduced." No one can read Mr. Hennen's admirable reports of his cases, without realizing the accuracy of these remarks.

There is, in this state of things, an urgent demand for the numerical method in the detail of injuries of the head. When Mr. Thompson asserts that irregularity of the pulse is a frequent attendant upon compression of the brain, and Mr. Abernethy declares that intermission of the pulse is less frequent in compression than in concussion of the brain, we naturally feel a desire to learn the circumstances under which these adverse observations were made. When that mode of detailing facts, adopted by Louis, is applied carefully to injuries of the head, a great deal of the ambiguity and perplexity that now attends upon the diagnosis of these injuries will be removed. Our experience, which is quite limited in these cases, coincides with the observation of Mr. Thompson, but we differ from Mr. Abernethy with great reluctance.

As a contribution to this department of surgery, we offer the following case. It presents some points of interest.

James Smith, aged about 35 years, a stout hearty man, somewhat given to drink, was, on the 23d of last October, by the violent plunging of his horse, thrown over the head of the animal, and the back of his head struck the rough pavement of Fulton street. He was stunned very much by the fall, but soon recovered, and when taken home walked, with a little assistance, from the side pavement up a steep bank, and from thence up stairs to his bed-room. As he passed the negro woman belonging to the family, he spoke to her in a lively good-humored way, and asked her if she knew him. A neighboring physician was called to the case, and upon ascertaining the violence used, and the external injury inflicted, he was surprised at the absence of grave symptoms. This gentleman summoned his partner to the case soon after he first saw it, and the symptoms denoted nothing more than concussion, and a very judicious prescription was ordered. About an hour after this, the case was placed under my charge, and after a long and minute examination, I was unable to discover anything more than concussion of the brain. The skin was pale and cool, the pulse regular but oppressed, the breathing sometimes hurried, at others tranquil. The patient talked without difficulty, at times delirious, at others perfectly rational. His greatest trouble was to tell how he had received the injury. He could occasionally remember that a horse was connected with it, at other times he was confident that he had been struck with a bar of iron.

The external injuries were a triangular wound of the integuments over the central portion of the suture that unites the occipital and parietal bones. In front there was a deep gash in the inferior portion of the chin. The region of the scalp around the wound of the occipital integuments, was, under my direction, shaved, but after a careful examination I was unable to detect a depression, and entertained some hope that

there  
feel s  
that  
I had  
appar  
racter  
on th  
cause  
sensib  
natur  
witho  
the b  
indic  
In  
carb  
when  
sider  
the c  
I saw  
was  
of se  
If th  
spas  
subst  
befor  
place  
He a  
foun  
mach  
spas  
tural  
E  
the n  
be u  
culia  
local  
of th  
calle  
term  
fract  
of c  
We  
cove  
war  
but  
C  
we  
the  
fora

there was no fracture. The pericranium was not cut, and I did not feel satisfied, by the symptoms, that there was any necessity for dividing that membrane. The judicious rule of Mr. Pott governed the decision. I had strong suspicions that more mischief had been done than was apparent, but I determined to watch the re-action and the general character of the case very closely. The suspicion of mischief was founded on the persistence of the effects of the concussion. There was little cause for suspecting compression; there was no approach to general insensibility; the eyes acted naturally; the pupils were obedient to their nature, contracting when exposed to the light, and dilating when it was withdrawn. The retina was sensible; the limbs were not relaxed, nor the breathing stertorous. The presence of these symptoms is considered indicative of compression.

In order to assist the reluctant re-action, I directed five grains of the carbonate of ammonia to be given every two hours, and brandy panada whenever he could be induced to take it. The last prescription I considered essential on account of the habits of the patient. My first visit to the case was between 2 and 3 o'clock, P. M., on the 23d. At 6 o'clock I saw him again, and found no material alteration, except that re-action was going on. At 10 o'clock I was summoned to the case on account of several spasms, and the case was thus made additionally complicated. If there was any pressure, why had it been completely dormant? If the spasms denoted pressure, there was also reason to fear laceration of the substance of the brain. But the other symptoms had not changed. Just before the visit, my patient rose from his bed and walked to the fireplace. After sitting some time, he rose and returned to bed without aid. He answered my questions without any difficulty, and with sanity. I found that he had been unable to retain the brandy panada on his stomach, and I determined to purge him actively, for the relief of the spasms. After I made the prescription, he bade me good night in a natural tone of voice.

Early on the morning of the 24th, I called on my patient, and found the most ample evidence of compression. What this evidence was, may be understood by the symptoms of compression detailed above. A peculiar motion of the hands and shoulders satisfied me so perfectly of the locality of the pressure, that I at once predicted that it was at the base of the brain, extending to the upper portion of the spinal column. I called Dr. J. B. Flint to the case, and a resort to the trephine was determined upon. On cutting the pericranium, a clean and undepressed fracture was found in the occipital bone, and, upon trepanning it, a mass of coagulated blood was found between the dura mater and the skull. We removed all that could be scooped out, and the patient partially recovered his sensibility, and the pulse improved. In about an hour afterwards I returned to the case, and introduced a catheter into the bladder, but found it entirely empty.

On the morning of the 25th, the day after the death of the patient, we made an examination of his head. The fracture extended from near the lambdoidal suture through the occipital bone, to the right of the foramen magnum, and terminating in the posterior foramen lacerum. A

large mass of coagulated blood was found occupying all the space included in the fracture. The middle meningeal artery had been lacerated; but why the evidences of this were so obscure, I am at a loss to know. Just before the spasms came on, the patient seized a tumbler of champaign brandy, and swallowed the whole of the liquor before the glass could be wrested from him. Had this any connection with the meningeal hemorrhage? Is it possible that the integrity of the vessel was injured by the fall, and the laceration made complete by the stimulus of the brandy? These are questions for which I am at a loss for an answer, and they are submitted to the profession for its judgment.—*Western Journal of Medicine and Surgery.*

---

#### CLIMATE AND DISEASES OF CHINA—HONG-KONG FEVER.

THE climate of China is, in no part of the empire, salubrious or adapted to the European constitution; but, of all parts of China, Hong-Kong is the most insalubrious, and the variability of the seasons and temperature are exceedingly injurious, and test the strength of the most robust constitutions. It would convey an inadequate idea of the rainy season, merely to speak of the torrents of rain; for the flood-gates of heaven appear to open, and pour forth torrents of water, apparently threatening the earth with a second deluge. The rainy season continues through the months of May, June, and occasionally July, and when these rains cease, miasmata arise, and the most unhealthy season of the year commences. The summer has been admitted, by all the Anglo-Indians whom we met in China, to be far hotter, and more fatally injurious to the constitution, than the hot months in India; and we have found continually the thermometer, standing in the shaded verandah of our dwelling, at 100°. The mortality which has prevailed among our troops, from the first landing in Hong-Kong, in 1840, up to this time, the end of 1848, will fully bear out the assertion; and in despite of commodious barracks and *hospitals*, our poor fellows fall victims to the pestilential climate of Hong-Kong in a fearful manner. The winter is exceedingly cold and piercing, and a north-east wind blows, whilst a burning sun scorches the head, and the transition from the burning heat of summer to the cutting blast of winter, injures the most robust. The intense heat of an almost vertical sun, whose rays are reflected by an arid rock, must necessarily prove injurious to health; but when this is combined with nights of piercing cold, when the thermometer falls below freezing point, and water freezes in the ewer placed in a bed-chamber, the effect upon an European constitution must be disastrous. In fact, the winter in China is *felt* much more severely than in Russia, where the internal arrangements of the dwellings are such as to exclude all cold; in Russia, warm clothing will suffice to protect those who take exercise in the open air, which it will not do in China, for neither furs nor cloth will exclude the cutting north-east wind, which chills and seems to penetrate the very *marrow of the bones*. Although, as before remarked, the climate of China is in no part salubrious, yet the north is the most



healthy portion of the empire ; but fever and dysentery prevail through the whole land, and the sudden changes from heat to cold produce rheumatic fevers and catarrhs of a severe nature, which too frequently prove fatal.

The scourge most dreaded in China is the fever termed the Hong-Kong fever, which has proved more fatal than cholera morbus ; and at the time we now write, November, 1848, so terribly has this fever prevailed among our troops, and proved so fearfully fatal in its character, that our men were ordered to live on board ships moored in the harbor of Victoria, in the hope of arresting the progress of this scourge. A new symptom has developed itself in this disease, namely, that of an eruption resembling the smallpox, accompanying the fever, and our most skilful medical officers are baffled in their endeavors to save the victim upon whom the harpy, Hong-Kong fever, has cast a withering glance. The temperate and intemperate become alike the victims of this dreadful fever, which generally commences with slight headache, gradually increasing until the whole head is so tender that no part can bear its own weight or pressure on the pillow without agony. The eyeballs are in such extreme pain, that light can be ill endured, yet the suffering produced by the closing of the eyelids is intolerable ; the frame becomes weak and enervated, and the patient finds himself unable to assume an erect posture, whilst the fever is raging to an incredible degree ; the symptoms increase hourly, and the patient usually sinks under its violence about the third or fifth day. Hong-Kong fever has these peculiar features, that the patient will apparently become much better, and rally considerably a short time before death ; instances have constantly occurred of the sufferer sitting up in bed, or, if allowed, rising from it, when delirium would suddenly become manifest, frequently in a violent degree, and if opposed injudiciously by force, the violence of the patient will increase, until he expires, apparently from exhaustion. In other cases, the patient, after rallying, will be seized with frightful convulsions, the features and eyes becoming distorted, fixed and rigid, and after some hours of painful suffering (distressing in the greatest degree to the medical attendant, because his knowledge is insufficient to alleviate the agony he witnesses, or save the life of the patient), the stricken being will cease to breathe. If blood be taken from the arm at the commencement of the fever, the case is generally sure to terminate fatally. This fearful disease appears to have baffled all medical skill, for treatment which has proved successful in one case will be ineffectual if adopted in another ; and medical men admit that medicine is of little service in this fever. All that can be done is to administer aperients, febrifuges, and apply cooling lotions to the head ; local bleeding is also adopted, and beneficially, by the application of leeches to the burning temples. The patient should be kept in a horizontal position, with the head depressed ; light nutriment should be constantly given, the utmost kindness, and most soothing manner used, when delirium appears. A medical man can therefore do but little towards the recovery of his patient, and the only chance of recovery, humanly speaking, is from constant, careful, judicious, and tender nursing, which men can rarely receive in

Hong-Kong or China, being generally left to the care of servants or male friends, unhabituated to act the part of nurses.—*H. G. Sirr's "China and the Chinese."*

---

ON HEMORRHAGE FROM THE UMBILICUS AFTER THE SEPARATION OF THE FUNIS

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

THE following cases are forwarded for publication in the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal, because they appear to throw some light upon the pathology of an affection which is happily of rare occurrence, and which has never yet been satisfactorily accounted for.

On the 15th of last September, I was called by Dr. Samuel R. Smith, of this place, to see a female child of Mrs. H., twelve days old, and which had been affected with hemorrhage from the umbilicus for twenty-four hours. The doctor had tried all the usual means of arresting hemorrhage, but without effect. Slight but continuous oozing kept the graduated compresses and bandages wet, and there was not at any time any appearance of cessation. The child lay in an almost comatose condition—the skin was intensely jaundiced, and scattered over the body we found several spots of purpura, irregularly shaped, and about the size of a five-cent piece. The child at birth was healthy in appearance, but it soon became jaundiced. The yellowness was much deeper than that of the icterus, so called, which is common among infants. After the meconium had passed, and this was of the usual dark color, the discharges from the bowels became clay-colored and the urine dark. The cord separated as usual, and the part had apparently healed. The yellowness of the skin increased; the child drooped, and hemorrhage from the umbilicus commenced upon the eleventh day. Simultaneously with this, the purpuric spots appeared in different parts of the body.

We looked upon the case as hopeless. From some unknown cause, the blood itself was evidently at fault; and there was every reason to suppose that all attempts to restrain it, even by actual cautery or ligature, would prove unavailing. The child died, without convulsions, in four hours after I saw it.

An autopsy was obtained. The tissues were all found deeply tinged with the same icteric hue. The mucous membrane of the stomach was at different points stained with spots of ecchymosis. The liver was large and of a reddish-brown color. The foetal openings were all obliterated, with the exception of the umbilical vein, from which the bleeding had proceeded. The gall-bladder was distended with greenish-yellow bile. At the junction of the hepatic and cystic ducts there was a slight prolongation, answering to the commencement of the *ductus communis choledochus*, but which terminated in a *cul de sac*. On carefully introducing the blow-pipe and endeavoring to force air through the duct, it was found that there was no communication with the duodenum;

this portion of the duct being entirely absent, and its place occupied by the outline of a tube perfectly impervious to air.

The jaundiced condition of the child was here sufficiently accounted for; and the case is interesting, as illustrative of the poisonous effects of the re-absorption or non-elimination of the constituents of the bile; depriving the blood of its fibrin, and apparently giving rise to that condition known as *purpura hemorrhagica*. It is a curious fact that the mother of this child had a daughter, three years since, who at the age of 4 months was affected with jaundice complicated with *purpura*, which terminated favorably.

Dr. Smith, who, I may remark, has for twenty-five years been engaged in a very extensive practice, has seen but one previous case of umbilical hemorrhage. It is also curious, that, in that instance, the mother had previously had a daughter who died with jaundice and *purpura* on the fifth day, but *without* hemorrhage. The case referred to presented the same features as the one above reported. Death occurred on the eighth day from hemorrhage, preceded by jaundice, purpuric spots, &c. No *post-mortem* examination was held. I have been able to meet with but very few reported cases of this affection. Billard, in his work on the Diseases of Infants, does not allude to it. In the New York Annalist, Dr. T. F. Cock reports a similar case, but as no *post-mortem* examination was made, the pathology of the case was unexplained. In Article No. 162, in the nineteenth number of Braithwaite's Retrospect, Mr. Ray relates a case of this kind. A lady had six children, three males and three females. The males all died from umbilical hemorrhage, after separation of the funis, with the attendant phenomena of jaundice, &c. In that article the case of the sixth child is given at length. It was attended by Mr. Ray, who resorted to every known means of arresting hemorrhage, but without the slightest effect. After encircling the umbilicus with a double ligature introduced by a curved needle, he was compelled to surround that by a single ligature, as "*the blood after a few moments began to ooze from the needle's punctures*." Mr. Ray attributes the hemorrhage in these cases "to the non-occlusion of the umbilical blood-vessels," and recommends the application of collodion at the time of the separation of the funis, as a preventive measure. But in cases analogous to these, any measures of this kind must evidently be futile.

Mr. West, in his Lectures on the Diseases of Children, says, in speaking of jaundice from congenital absence of the hepatic or cystic ducts, "one remarkable phenomenon attending these cases, is the tendency to hemorrhage by which they are characterized."

These facts, then, seem to indicate that umbilical hemorrhage occurring in infants from the fifth to the twelfth day after birth, and attended with jaundice, and especially when signs of *purpura* are present, is an accident altogether beyond the reach of art, because it is connected with a congenital malformation. They also suggest the importance of paying particular attention to the condition of the liver in *purpura hemorrhagica*, when it occurs even in the adult. They lead us to suspect that the hemorrhagic diathesis may sometimes, perhaps, be owing to a defective secretion of bile. They go to strengthen the proof that the

foetal system performs the office of secretion; and may we not infer that there is a direct communication between the *interlobular veins* and the radicles of the hepatic ducts? the patency of the umbilical vein depending, as it does, in these cases, upon the obstruction existing in the ducts. They prove, also, that the meconium does not owe its color to the bile, according to the assertion of Muller, viz., "that it is the excrementitious matter of the bile in the fœtus, which collects, together with the intestinal mucus in the lower part of the canal, forming the meconium."

W. C. ANDERSON.

*Tompkinsville, Staten Island, N. Y., Dec. 1849.*

#### THE ART OF DENTISTRY.

*To the Editor of the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.*

SIR,—It was my lot to inherit a bad constitution, as you doubtless already know; and among the rest, a tendency to premature decay of the teeth. I can scarcely remember when I was free from toothache. But this natural tendency to premature decay was greatly increased, at the age of fourteen years, by an injudicious prescription of mercurial medicine. My change of habits, about twenty-five years ago, was so radical and thorough, as to give promise, for a time, of a partial emancipation from troubles of the teeth; but they were found, at length, to be past redemption.

Twenty years ago I sought counsel of the dentists. Some of them advised a thorough "revision;" others thought it impracticable, owing to a supposed malformation of the lower jaw. It was at length concluded to "patch up," by filing, filling, &c. But all to little purpose; matters grew worse, rather than better.

During the last five or six years, my friends have repeatedly advised me to think, once more, of the "thorough revision." Early the last summer I consented to a trial, and visited my old friend, Dr. Hitchcock. Contrary to my expectation, he assured me that I should find no difficulty in using a set of artificial teeth—that there was no serious malformation of the jaw—and that, on the whole, the measure was advisable. The old fangs and teeth were accordingly extracted, and, in due time, a complete set for both jaws made and applied.

There were three objects which I hoped to gain by these appliances. First, to give prominence to the lips and mouth. Secondly, to improve the speech. Thirdly, to furnish aid in the work of masticating food.

For some time it was supposed that only the first object was accomplished. My speech was not at all improved; and as for ever being able to eat, with the new machinery, I believed it to be utterly impossible.

The teeth were first worn in July last. For three months, I scarcely attempted to retain them in my mouth at the table, even when I used an article of food which required no mastication. But being invited to a neighbour's house, one afternoon, I found myself under the necessity of "changing my appearance" at the table, or retain my teeth. I chose the latter. Necessity, the mother of invention, came greatly to my aid, and I succeeded better than I expected.

To cut short a long story, I made, from time to time, other trials, till at length I overcame the difficulty. I can now eat better with the teeth than without them. Indeed I might almost say that I can hardly prevent them from eating, whenever they are led into temptation. And I have no doubt I shall find them, in this respect, peculiarly serviceable—worth ten times their cost.

In regard to improving my speech, others can judge better than myself. I think, however, that even in this particular I shall finally be a gainer. The first end is undoubtedly secured, as almost every one I meet with pauses to remark on my *improved health*.

This article is written, Mr. Editor, to do justice to a profession which I have long regarded as little more than humbuggery. Whether I have been peculiarly fortunate in selecting Dr. H. is quite another question. If there are better dentists than he in the community, I am glad of it. It is *the art of dentistry*, and not the dentists themselves, which most interests me, and which I desire, by these remarks, to recommend to those who have suffered twenty or thirty years, as I have, or even for one half that period.

Yours, &c.

West Newton, Dec. 26, 1849.

WM. A. ALCOTT.

## THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, JANUARY 2, 1850

*Vital Statistics.*—"Is there any information important to the public, and within the field of your investigations, which may be procured through the agency of the National Census Board?" This question was addressed to Dr. E. H. Barton, of New Orleans, an accomplished member of the medical profession, who answered it in a letter characterized by enlarged and statesman-like conceptions of the importance of a class of facts which can be gathered only by the national government. Here is an extract from the letter, in which he alludes to the blunders of the last census, that, it is hoped, will be avoided in the coming one.

"The United States census takers for 1840 gave us [in New Orleans] a population of 27,000 more than we actually had; but as the mortality was not added to in a similar ratio, it made us, by the Bobadil method of computation, the healthiest city in the Union. And some of our writers have since calculated our mortality as 1 in 58, a ratio of salubrity far exceeding any city in America, and probably in the world!

"The importance of a registry law to a political community may be compared to the value of an individual knowing the state of his health and of his affairs; a man who takes no note of these may be ruined before he knows it. So a body politic, that is ignorant of its condition—of a prosperous or adverse state of its affairs—of what may advance the one or remedy the state of the other—may be actually retrograding while it is supposed to be thriving, and may be suffering while in reach of all the gifts of fortune. This would be the more obvious if this was the general belief throughout the world; but the state of foreign and conterminous countries are constantly being made known, constituting statistical information:

the wants and the sources of supply are constantly being published, and the balance struck:—in fact, the limit to the advantages of a people becoming acquainted with their condition is about as boundless as the wants of man, for thus only can it be bettered (about as strong a feeling in America as in any other country), and some may extend it to all human knowledge, and a reference to the relative condition of nations will show that their prosperous or adverse condition, indeed their elevation in the scale of intelligence, is in a great measure dependent upon an enlightened knowledge of their own condition and wants, and of those of other parts of the world whence they may supply them."

It is hoped that the present session of Congress will not be so occupied with matters that have little connection with the real prosperity of the country, as to neglect any necessary provision for the taking of a census that shall be a model one for other countries and future times.

---

*Home-made Microscope.*—Mr. Allen, of Springfield, the self-taught optician, has completed a second microscope, the defining power of which is remarkable. The red corpuscles of human blood are exhibited under the prodigious power of this instrument, with wonderful distinctness. When compared at Cambridge, last week, with several microscopes from the first establishments in Europe, Mr. Allen's was found fully equal to any of them. Even the celebrated instruments of Oberhauser, so well known abroad, possessed no advantages over Mr. Allen's work. If scientific men would extend a fostering hand to this American genius, they would not be disappointed in their expectations. This one is already sold in New York for \$150.

---

*Preparation of Cod-liver Oil.*—It has become so apparent that an extensive demand for this excellent article has led to very shameful adulterations, that one of the means, and a necessary one, of obtaining that which is genuine, is to purchase of men of established integrity. We are assured that pollock oil, and in fact the product of any and every kind of fish liver, has become too precious to be lost, and hence it is all thrown upon the medical market as the real and genuine cod-liver oil. It is moreover asserted that livers of the cod are occasionally extensively diseased, having ulcerations upon their surfaces, and deep excavations into their very substance. Yet there is not always proper care in rejecting them. We hear Mr. John Marston, of Lynn, well spoken of.

---

*Position of the Medical Profession in Society.*—A discourse introductory to the present course of lectures in the Medical College of Georgia, by the Professor of Surgery, Dr. Paul F. Eve, a gentleman distinguished in all the attainments of professional life, has been received. He gives a plain statement, touching the present position of practitioners of medicine, that is known to many, though but few are willing to acknowledge all that passes through their minds upon the point; viz., that they are greatly undervalued and underrated in society. With all the educational advantages which are attainable, and the patient devotion of physicians through the best period of their lives, to gather instruction from the discoveries and experience of all past ages, for the purpose of ameliorating the sufferings of humanity, they cannot compete successfully with drastic



pill-makers and spice bitters manufacturers. Neither does the saving of life by an operation in surgery, or by the skilful treatment of disease, so attract the public attention and favor, as the absurd prescriptions of a reputed Indian doctress, or of a mesmeric clairvoyant who sees deep abscesses in the liver with his eyes shut! Dr. Eve has a right idea of the true cause of this degrading public sentiment. It partly grows out of the personal dislike which rival practitioners bear towards each other; and partly from the all-depressing influence of the State legislatures, which charter, unhesitatingly, all and any kind of institution that indicates hostility to the regular schools of medicine. Dr. Eve is right, too, in the delineation of the difficulties in the way. Who will first pluck a beam out of his own eye, to help usher in that much to be desired millennial period, when those pursuing the same elevated professional course, shall aid, counsel and assist each other, instead of vilifying and sowing the seeds of discord and unhappiness?

---

*Registration of Marriages, Births and Deaths, in Washington, D.C.*—Thomas Miller, M.D., under whose immediate eye all these records appear to have been made, is so thoroughly methodical, that we have perfect confidence in the statements made by him, and recently published by the municipal authorities of the city. The necrological year, if not the financial, appears to end there on the first day of July; hence the totals, in the report of the Board of Health, close at that date. Deaths from July 1, 1848, to July 1, 1849, 828. In the same time, the marriages solemnized, were 179 of white persons, and 15 of colored. The births were 675: 301 white males and 309 white females; 32 colored males and 33 colored females.

---

*Origin of Epidemics.*—An examination of Sir James Murray's treatise—"Electricity as a cause of cholera and other epidemics, and the relation of galvanism to the action of remedies," alluded to a week or two since—enables us to say that he has added an immense number of important facts to the meagre stock of knowledge extant upon the subject of epidemics generally. He scarcely recognizes malaria at all, and endeavors to demonstrate that noxious emanations are disturbed *electro-galvanic currents* and accumulations, sometimes positive, sometimes negative, causing a want of electrical equilibrium in human bodies. The experiments are irresistible testimony, as far as they go, since no law in nature can possibly be changed to accommodate a theory. It strikes us, therefore, that the doctrine promulgated in this small work, is destined to operate upon a class of minds that may hereafter carry investigations much further than Sir James has done. He belabors old notions in regard to marsh miasm, right manfully, like one substituting truth for error. The following fact is incidentally stated—"I made strict inquiries in many places," says our author, "and I never yet could find that a house or wall covered at the top with ivy, vines, or weeping evergreens, was at any time destroyed by lightning."

Sir James Murray has constructed an ideal instrument, denominated the *epidemic electrometer*. One leg of a bent tube indicates the positive, and the other the negative side. Positive electricity induces or augments vital excitation, while the negative indicates diseases of debility. This is exceedingly ingenious, even if imaginary.

So powerfully does he plead for the closing of burial yards in cities, the undoubted sources of alarming conditions of the public health, that all municipal officers should make themselves familiar with his views. "When the organic elements of dead animals are resolving into kindred dust, that decomposing mass acts as a feeder for a vast display of galvanic actions in the moist grave, as certainly as an acid liquor sets loose a flood of electric fluid in a galvanic battery. As an untoward generation of disturbed electric agency is constantly at work in the continuous cauldron of dissolving graves, its action must be felt by the living, in proportion to the vicinity and intensity of the galvanic disturbance."

Finally, Sir James will pass in America for an ardent, industrious medical inquirer, who follows one idea, with that kind of philosophical determination which Peter Pindar shows to have animated Sir Joseph Banks in the pursuit of a butterfly. It looked well on the wing, and therefore he desired it. This electrical theory of diseases is ingenious, and if it is received universally, the champion who secures the assent of the medical world to it will have achieved a great revolution. Here we leave the subject, trusting that those who have access to the publication will study its contents with as much gratification as we have done.

*Ovariectomy*.—Dr. Bigelow performed an important operation on Saturday last, before the medical class, at the Massachusetts General Hospital. He took from the abdomen of a young woman an ovarian tumor weighing seven pounds; and while extracting it, discovered a fibrous tumor nearly the size of a goose egg, attached to the base of the uterus, which was detached. The particulars, with the results of the case, will be given hereafter.

*Vermont Medical Society*.—Although the proceedings were but recently published, the transactions to which they refer transpired in October, at Montpelier, the capital of the State. The following gentlemen were elected officers for the ensuing year:—J. L. Chandler, M.D., of St. Albans, *President*. J. N. Stiles, M.D., Strafford, *Vice President*. O. Smith, M.D., Berlin, *Secretary*. J. Y. Dewey, M.D., Montpelier, *Treasurer*. J. B. Bancroft, M.D., of St. Johnsbury, and E. G. Carr, M.D., of Castleton, M.D., *Orators* for the next annual meeting at Montpelier. H. H. Niles, M.D., of Post Mills, and B. R. Palmer, M.D., of Woodstock, *Orators* for the semi-annual meeting at Woodstock. H. H. Niles, M.D., of Post Mills, and J. P. Bancroft, M.D., of St. Johnsbury, *Delegates* to the Woodstock School. Earl Cushman, M.D., of Orwell, and J. Y. Dewey, M.D., of Montpelier, *Delegates* to the Castleton School.

*Discussion on Chloroform*.—At a meeting of the Westminster Medical Society, Nov. 3, 1849, Mr. Greenhalgh stated the results of 32 cases of parturition in which chloroform had been given, which had come under his observation. All the patients were at the full period. In no case did any permanent ill effects follow. The largest amount of chloroform made use of in any one case, was two ounces and a half; and this was extended over nine hours—the longest period of inhalation in any of the cases. Mr. Greenhalgh concluded by giving it as his opinion, that although this agent occasionally produces dangerous and even fatal effects; yet if cases

be judiciously selected, the remedy cautiously administered, and its effects properly watched, it may often be advantageously given both in natural and instrumental labors.

Dr. Henry Bennet had administered chloroform in obstetric cases ever since its introduction by Dr. Simpson, and he was thoroughly in favor of its employment under certain circumstances.

Dr. Webster detailed three cases which had come under his cognizance (in Bethlem Hospital), showing the serious consequences sometimes following the inhalation of chloroform during child-birth. In the first case, the patient was for three days incoherent. She soon afterwards became so furious as to require confinement. After twelve months, she was discharged cured. In the second case, the patient did not recover from the effects of the chloroform, and soon after delivery became quite maniacal, and continued so for many months, but recovered ultimately. The third case might not be considered as a true instance of insanity; however, he would relate the chief symptoms. The cerebral disturbance, following the use of chloroform, never ceased entirely; the patient could not sleep at night, and often said she felt as if in the presence of a madman who was going to murder her. Three weeks afterwards she became almost maniacal, exhibited much mental excitement, laughing frequently; conducted herself like an infant, and lost her memory, in which state she continued during five months, when recovery took place.—*London Jour. of Medicine.*

*Medical Miscellany.*—A diseased hip-joint, of three years' standing, was lately removed at Spaulding, Eng.—A physician in France, 66 years of age, lately married his third wife, a young woman of 21, to whom he gave all he possessed, by contract. He was shortly after found dead—hung. The wife, and a supposed accomplice, accused of his murder, were arrested.—Opium eating, especially by females, is represented by the Brooklyn Advertiser to be alarmingly on the increase in this country.—Dr. Philemon Stacy has been appointed post-master of Hatfield, Mass.—Dr. Seth Geer has been elected a coroner in the city of New York.—In the New York institutions for the poor, the vicious and criminal, which are supported by taxing the inhabitants, the numbers are as follows, at this time—with a fearful prospect, as in Boston, of a perpetual increase by immigration from Europe:—Bellevue Hospital, 511; Lunatic Asylum, 397; Alms House, 1112; Penitentiary Hospital, 824; Smallpox Hospital, 10; Randall's Island, 1384; City Prison, 238. Total, 4476.—A pamphlet has appeared on the use of alcohol for the preparation of medicines, and a letter, also, to ladies, in favor of female physicians.

DIED.—At Monrovia, Africa, Dr. J. W. Prout, a much esteemed Physician. He had visited a vessel on account of sickness on board, and was unfortunately drowned while returning.—At Onondaga Hollow, N. Y., Dr. Joseph W. Brewster, a lineal descendant of Elder Brewster, of the Mayflower, 86.

*Deaths in Boston*—for the week ending Saturday noon, December 29, 68.—Males, 42—females, 26. Accidental, 2—apoplexy, 1—inflammation of the brain, 1—inflammation of the bowels, 2—consumption, 11—croup, 2—childbed, 3—dysentery, 2—dropsy of brain, 5—erysipelas, 2—typhus fever, 2—scarlet fever, 2—lung fever, 2—typhoid fever, 1—fever, 1—disease of the heart, 3—influenza, 1—infantile diseases, 3—inflammation of the lungs, 4—disease of the liver, 1—marasmus, 3—old age, 1—peritonitis, 1—paralysis, 1—smallpox, 2—scrofula, 1—teething, 1—disease of the brain, 1—unknown, 1.

Under 5 years, 28—between 5 and 20 years, 6—between 20 and 40 years, 19—between 40 and 60 years, 13—over 60 years, 2. Americans, 32; foreigners and children of foreigners, 36.

*Buffalo Medical College—New Edifice.*—The new College edifice was formally opened, by appropriate public exercises, on the 7th ult., the day of the commencement of the term now in progress. An address was delivered by the Hon. Millard Fillmore, Vice President of the United States, and Chancellor of the University. The Chancellor was followed by an address by the Dean of the Medical Faculty, embracing a historical sketch of the rise and progress of the Medical College.

The new college edifice is entirely completed, excepting the section to be finished as a museum. The completion of the latter is deferred, as it is not needed at present, a hall, 50 feet by 20, being appropriated for a museum, in the present arrangement, which is adequate to all the wants of the institution. We think we are not biased by a feeling of partiality, which is natural, if not excusable, when we say, that we doubt if a more commodious and convenient building for purposes of medical education exists in the United States. The lecture rooms present one peculiar feature which has excited much attention. They are seated with cast iron arm chairs, without bottoms, firmly screwed upon cushioned benches. They are pleasing to the eye, and exceedingly comfortable to the sitter; in fact, combining all the advantages of a luxurious arm chair. The right arm of each chair is expanded for the convenience of taking notes. The chair is light, weighing only 18 pounds, and, being painted, presents quite an elegant appearance. We know of no educational institution in which similar provisions for the physical ease of pupils exist. If the faculties of the mind are inactive, it will not be because the attention is absorbed by uneasy sensations of the body, and while the latter are obviated, the indulgence of postures favorable to indolence and sleep is effectually prevented. *Buffalo Medical Journal.*

*The Fathers of Medicine.*—M. Daremberg, the eminent Librarian of the Academy of Medicine, of Paris, well known by his vast researches in ancient medical literature, is now proceeding to Italy, in order to gather in the public libraries of that country, further materials for the edition of the medical writers of antiquity, which he is to publish, under the immediate support of the Academy. The Minister of Public Instruction, at whose suggestion this scientific mission has been instituted, requested the Academy of Medicine to give M. Daremberg detailed instructions on the following heads:—1st, history and literature of medicine, both in remote and in the middle ages; 2nd, the collection of materials for the above-mentioned work; 3rd, the compilation of a catalogue *raisonné* of medical manuscripts, (this catalogue is already begun, and comprises the libraries of Paris, England, and the north of Germany.) These various tasks have appeared to the Academy above the efforts of a single man, and M. Daremberg was therefore desired to confine himself especially to the examination of manuscripts referring to the following authors: Hippocrates, Rufus, Galen, Oribasius, and Aëtius.—*London Lancet.*

*The Prize of £4000.*—This legacy for the discoverer of a specific against cholera turns out to be a hoax. But what is but too true in the matter is, that very numerous applications concerning this prize have been made to the Academy of Medicine, and considering that we possess such a number of infallible remedies, it is strange that so many thousands should be allowed to die, and that the specific wanted the stimulus of a few thousands to come forward. One applicant had the face to request a small advance to be made to him upon this legacy, which he was certain of obtaining.—*Ibid.*